

Washington DC - Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) called on Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld today to immediately investigate the recruitment practices of the Portland Armed Services Center.

This action comes on the heels of an Oregonian story, published on Sunday May 7th, that detailed the inappropriate recruitment of Jared Guinther, an 18 year old autistic high school student from Portland, Oregon. Although Blumenauer's office has coordinated with the Guinther family, and has been in frequent contact with the Army recruiting battalion in Portland regarding this issue, he believes this may not be an isolated case of inappropriate recruiting practices and therefore needs a thorough review.

"Though I am relieved that the Army decided today to discharge Jared, I am deeply concerned about a wider trend of abuses in the recruiting process," Blumenauer said. "I have written to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld demanding an Army Inspector General investigation into this specific situation, as well as the breadth of recruitment practices."

In his letter to Sec. Rumsfeld demanding an investigation by the Army Inspector General, Blumenauer writes:

"Military recruiters face extreme pressure to meeting enlistment targets and quotas. As such, I am concerned that the military has created a situation where recruiters are pressured to act unethically in order to successfully fulfill their orders.

Blumenauer hopes that a complete, external investigation will determine what actually happened in this particular recruitment case, which specific individuals should be held responsible for the actions taken, and what failures in the recruitment process allowed it to occur.